



Dallas Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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DALLAS ISD COMPLETES INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS MADE AT EBBY HALLIDAY ELEMENTARY

District Exploring Options to Train Staff on Issues of Diversity and Cultural Differences

DALLAS-The Dallas Independent School District has completed an extensive investigation of allegations made this past fall at Ebby Halliday Elementary School.

The investigation, conducted by the district's Office of Professional Responsibility, determined that some staff used inappropriate means to instill discipline at the school and did not properly report suspected child abuse. While some initial allegations proved to be true, several others were unsubstantiated.

As a result of the findings, staff at Halliday Elementary are being directed to attend training on child abuse reporting requirements, proper disciplinary methods and effective classroom management.

"The actions that took place at Ebby Halliday Elementary School this past fall are regrettable," said Dallas ISD Interim Superintendent Alan King. "Our goal is to ensure that incidents such as these do not happen at any district campus."

In addition to Halliday Elementary School staff receiving training, the district is in the process of exploring various options available to train district staff on the important issues of diversity and cultural differences.

One of the investigation's findings indicated that administrators at the school did not speak Spanish, which contributed to their inability to communicate directly with some of the parents of students. This led to confusion, hostility and distrust in the Halliday Elementary community. This in turn led to many of the allegations against Dallas ISD employees in the OPR report.

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“There is an expectation that a positive school climate exist on every Dallas ISD campus,” said King. “We also expect our campuses to be inviting and accessible to parents within reason.”

A portion of the OPR investigation was released today in compliance with an Open Records request from various media outlets. Because the investigation covered sensitive issues related to suspected child abuse reporting, the full OPR report has been sent to the Attorney General for counsel on what can legally be released. A determination is expected in the next couple of weeks.

The initial portion of the report released today centers on a staff retreat taken to an off-site location prior to the beginning of the school year. The attendance at the retreat caused staff at Halliday Elementary to miss a scheduled mandatory training on how to report suspected child abuse.

Because of the numerous legal issues involved, individual personnel action taken as a result of the findings cannot be shared. All professional employees of the Dallas Independent School District are entitled to very detailed statutory protections set out in Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The procedures set out in law ensure that Chapter 21 employees may not be subject to personnel action unless there is very strong evidence supporting such action.

Of the 22 employees investigated, three have been suspended for three days without pay, seven have received reprimands, and ten received a letter of concern with directives.

The investigation into allegations at Halliday was one of the most detailed ever conducted by the district’s Office of Professional Responsibility. The investigation took more than 500 hours over the course of 100 days and included interviews with more than 80 witnesses, as well as more than 100 exhibits.

“We would like to thank the parents, students and the staff at Ebby Halliday Elementary School, as well as Ms. Halliday and her family, for their patience throughout this process,” said King. “We are especially grateful that the vast majority of this school year at Halliday Elementary has been trouble-free and seems to be doing well.”